

**FEATURING BEST PRACTICES
OF STATE AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

**Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation's
Training Academy**

**Professional Development and Training
Providing partnerships for improving performance
through education, training, and professional
development**

**Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
implemented this best practice
in July 1997**

*Qualifying under the
Best Practices catalogue*

3 Provide Capabilities
34 Develop resource capabilities
342 Train personnel

**Best Practice Summary
(how it works, how you measure it)**

Examples of classes (these were offered third quarter of 1999):

- Enhancing Telephone Skills

- Back Injury Prevention
- State Employee Y2K Awareness Program
- Jamestown Historic Roundtable
- Yorktown Historic Roundtable
- Fire Safety
- Personnel Documentation Workshop
- State Vehicle Procedures
- Defensive Driving
- Volunteer Services-Policies and Procedures Training
- Storytelling Techniques
- Customer Research-Survey Administration Training
- Customer Courtesy and Hospitality Training
- AAM Re-accreditation
- Introduction to the Internet and Foundation web sites
- Effective Coaching Techniques
- Introduction to Networking Concepts
- Orientation to Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
- Emergency Response Training

Four quarterly directories are prepared listing training, developmental opportunities, and containing sign-up sheets. The purpose of each class is defined as well, stipulating as “who should attend”, i.e. “all staff”, “required for new employees”, etc. The directories also provide a full calendar of events for that quarter.

The Training Academy initiated an Internal Appreciation Program whereby employees recognize and thank other employees who have assisted them in some way or performed a difficult task successfully. Monthly drawings were held with gifts given to the winners (field trips to other museums or gift certificates to the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation gift shops). During the six-month pilot program, 370 appreciation cards were presented to employees BY employees.

The Training Academy Committee is made up of representatives from each department within the agency. They decide which courses to offer, approve the scheduling of the courses and analyze programs (whether to continue or not). They meet monthly.

The Training Academy also has a large Staff Resource Library which offers work-related audio cassettes, videos, workbooks, guides, books and CD Rom which employees may check out and enjoy.

Most training classes are held on-site during working hours. A few are held off-site. Instructors are primarily employees, but a few instructors have been participants of the Computer Training Contract administered by the Virginia Department of Personnel and Training.

Impact on the Process Organizational Performance (OUTCOMES)

The impact on the Foundation has been positive to say the least. Morale is much higher, training is more organized, and employees are more productive. Since course content is reviewed and participation is assessed, redundancy is eliminated and unnecessary classes are removed from the agendas. Another very important factor is scheduling. Classes for front-line staff are now held during the least busy months, allowing staff to be on site during peak visitation.

Best Practice Qualification

This practice was qualified as being a “best” practice by comparing it to training sessions held elsewhere, comparing it to agencies who have no structured training center whatsoever and holding it in contrast to the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation’s prior training programs. The main measure is that of improved employee performance, an enhanced sense of unity, higher morale, and a well-trained staff.

For Additional Information

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